



Opening of the BB MEMORIAL GARDEN

National Memorial Arboretum, Alrewas,
Staffordshire 21st June 2008

Yes, it did rain, but the atmosphere was far from dreary. During the morning the Arboretum was taken over with TV cameras, stewards, escorts, local radio and the arrival of hundreds of BB members, guests and visitors from all over the British Isles and Republic of Ireland. The day began with the formal raising of the Brigade Flag and five top BB marching bands played at various times throughout the proceedings.

Mr John Young, MBE, Chairman of the Brigade Executive, welcomed everyone and the comparatively small chapel was full to bursting with the majority of the visitors having to stand outside to hear the service relayed. The Service included prayers written and spoken by Anchor and Junior

members and scripture readings and music by young people. The Very Revd Professor Alan Main delivered an inspirational address.

Following the chapel Service, Mr Chris Row, Brigade Vice President, stood by the twin pillars at the entrance of the garden and explained the significance of the various elements, which make up the garden. Alan Main performed the dedication and the Brigade President, Sir Kenneth Calman, spoke before parting a ribbon, assisted by Anchor Boy twins and finally entered the Garden to unveil the plaque at its centre.

After the sounding of 'Retreat' and lowering of the Brigade flag, although wet, all agreed that the garden looked a real 'picture' on the day. Mr Charles Bagot-Jewitt, Director of the National Memorial Arboretum said that of all the events this year, including three Royal

Occasions, the opening of the BB garden was his favourite. There was wide media coverage, including BBC Radio Stoke and Central ITV News.

Further work, to extend the



paved area in front of the garden, and the burial of a time-capsule is already under way, and progress is being made with a Memorial Book and educational material suitable for inclusion within the various BB badge programmes.

Information regarding the garden is available at: <http://memorialgarden.boys-brigade.org.uk> – this includes details of special philatelic covers and remaining badges for sale. A DVD film of the day is being produced and will be advertised on the website.

The Brigade is very grateful to the small group of very dedicated volunteers from the West Midlands District whose enthusiasm brought this vision to fruition.

